

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Ralph et al.  
Serial No.: 09/975,471  
Filed: 10/11/2002  
For: Intervertebral Spacer Device  
Utilizing a Spirally Slotted  
Belleville Washer Having  
Radially Spaced Concentric  
Grooves

Examiner: Not assigned  
Art Unit: 3738  
Docket No.: F-209  
Dated: 4/8/2002

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, DC 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Preliminary to the prosecution of the above-identified application, please amend the application as indicated below:

In the specification:

Please amend paragraph [0001] as follows.

CLEAN COPY OF AMENDED PARAGRAPH:

*A1*  
[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/970,479, filed 10/4/2001, which is fully incorporated herein by reference.

MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED PARAGRAPH:

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/789,936/0970,479, filed 2/15/01/2001, which is fully incorporated herein by reference.

Docket No. F-209  
Application Serial No. 09/975,471

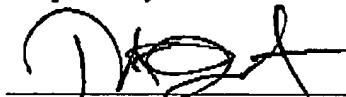
With this preliminary amendment, the Applicants desire to change the claim to priority in this application from U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/789,936, filed 2/15/2001, to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/970,479, filed 10/4/2001.

Applicants therefore hereby request a corrected filing receipt.

In addition, if any further action is required to effect this change of priority, Applicants request that the undersigned be called immediately so that the additional required actions can be taken.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments concerning this preliminary amendment or any other matters pertaining to this application, the Applicants respectfully request that the undersigned be called so that the same may be addressed in the most rapid and direct manner.

Respectfully submitted,



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**FAX COVER SHEET**

TO: UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

**GROUP ART UNIT: 3738**

**FAX: 703-872-9302**

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**GROUP 3700**

DATE: 4/8/2002

PAGES: 3 (INCLUDING THIS PAGE)

RE:

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